

## SET FREE TO TELL THE STORY

Scripture: [Luke 8:26–39](#)

There are moments in Scripture that can literally take your breath away. Not just because of what Jesus did or said. But because they reveal who He was! Our lesson today from Luke 8:26–39 is one of those moments. Here, Jesus doesn't just heal. He liberates! He just doesn't encounter evil. He defeats it! And He doesn't leave quietly. He sends a witness into the world making today's passage not just about demons and pigs. It's about who you *are*. And the power of a transformed life. Take your Bible. Turn to [Luke 8:26–39](#) and follow along as I read

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... Jesus had just arrived in the region of the Gerasenes. That's an area on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee mostly Gentile. Non-Jewish. Outsiders. The region was known as the Decapolis and was a group of ten Hellenistic cities east of the Jordan River in what is now Jordan, Syria, and Israel. Hellenistic refers to Greek culture, language, and influence. It arose after the takeover of Alexander the Great around 323 B. C. and continued for several centuries after Alexander conquered much of the ancient world. From Greece to Egypt, to parts of India, Greek culture blended in with local cultures. Greek language became widely used. Philosophy, art, architecture, and religion were heavily influenced by Greek styles and ideas. Cities often had Greek-style theaters which were large, open-air stadiums built into a hillside shaped like a semi-circle wrapped around the stage for natural acoustics. They were used for dramatic performances, particularly tragedies and comedies. And could hold thousands of spectators. There were temples and marketplaces.

So, when Jesus and the apostles traveled around the Decapolis people spoke Greek, were familiar with Greek customs and way of life. Religions and culture varied. Not strictly Jewish. So, when the Gospels mention Gerasenes, or the Decapolis, they're places influenced by Greek culture. And that's important to understand how Jesus' message reached beyond Jewish communities. The Gerasenes raised pigs for their livelihood. Pigs are unclean animals in Jewish law.

Jesus met a man there who was completely unwell! He was possessed by many demons who called themselves "Legion" meaning *a large number*. Those spiritual beings had taken possession of that man, tormenting him mentally and physically. He was living with pigs among the tombs. Burial places for the dead. A cemetery! Naked. Shunned by society, he was unable to be restrained. Even with chains! He was violently strong! No chain could hold him! He broke chains with his bare hands! He was tormented. Crying out, and self-harming. He had no home. No peace. And was someone to be afraid of. (Mark 5:5) This man was the picture of torment! Physically. Mentally. Spiritually. We don't know who he was. His identity has been lost. But when Jesus asked his name, he didn't give his own name. He said, "*Legion!*" because he was overwhelmed by so many demons.

He was not just afflicted. He was dehumanized. And before we move on in this story, remember, a lot of people today walk around spiritually dry, emotionally tormented. Totally isolated, feeling like their name is lost under the weight of pain, drug addiction, fear, or shame. Jesus didn't flinch! He saw what no one else saw. Not just a man to be avoided. But a child of God to be restored! And when Jesus told the demons to come out of the man, they begged Jesus not to send them into the abyss, which is a spiritual place for evil. Not a literal *pit* you can find on a map. It is a place of imprisonment. Torture and torment. A symbol of God's control over chaos and evil.

So, Jesus gave them their request. He had them enter into a herd of pigs instead of the abyss. And when that happened, the pigs rushed into the lake and drowned, which shows that evil is real! But it's not more powerful than Jesus. Not then! Not now! Not ever! When Jesus commands. Evil runs off! And that's good news. That man, once broken and possessed was now clothed. In his right mind. Sitting at the feet of Jesus. And what chains couldn't do; Jesus had done with His Word.

Then He sent the healed man back to stay where he was from and witness to the people. It was a way to plant the seeds of the Gospel in Gentile territory. You'd expect celebration. But that's not what happened. People from nearby towns come out to see the healed man. And they were afraid! The people were afraid of Jesus' power!

They were not familiar with Jewish religious expectations of Messiah. They didn't celebrate that miracle. They asked Jesus to leave! Why? Maybe it was the loss of the pigs. That was a big hit on their economy! Maybe it was the fear of the supernatural. Or maybe it's that when Jesus shows up, things change. And sometimes, people would rather stay in control rather than face Divine power. But don't be too quick to judge them. How often have you wanted Jesus to leave certain parts of your life alone? Change is too hard! You might have to give up some

things you'd rather not! Now, As Jesus prepared to leave, the healed man begged to go with Him. Who could blame him? But Jesus said, *"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you."*

Jesus didn't just restore this man's health. He restored his purpose. And he became the first missionary to the Gentiles! An unlikely evangelist in a region that wanted Jesus gone! And what did that man do? He told them what God had done for him.

And that's *your* witness! Say publicly what God has done for you. Share your personal experience of God's grace, mercy, and power with humility, honesty, and hope. It's not about being perfect. Or having all the answers. It's about being real. You do it by telling how God has been at work in your life. What circumstances God has brought you through. How you experienced healing. Forgiveness. Strength, and peace. Tell what prayers God answered. Big or small. Even small moments of grace matter! Don't downplay them. And keep it real! *And* personal. You don't need fancy language. Or deep theology. Just speak from your heart: *"I was struggling with \_\_\_\_, but God gave me peace."* *"I used to think \_\_\_\_, but Jesus changed how I see things."* *"I still have questions, but I've found hope in Christ."* People connect with honesty more than perfection. And be sure to give God the credit! Be clear. It's God who brought the change in you. Not just your willpower or luck: *"I couldn't do it on my own. God met me where I was."* *"It was God's love and grace that turned things around."*

So, let your life speak for itself! Sometimes the most powerful witness is how you live. Let your life be your sermon! Show kindness, when others won't. Choose peace, instead of revenge. Remain hopeful, in tough times. Then, when someone asks, *"How are you so calm?"* you can say, *"Because I know God is with me."* You don't need to preach a sermon! *Just live it!* Be willing to share when the moment is right. Listen as much as you speak. And be open to saying, *"Can I tell you what God's done for me?"* Jesus told the healed man: *"Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you."* And that's what he did! According to Mark 5:20: *"The man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."* His testimony made an impact. Not all may have been converted immediately, though his story clearly stirred curiosity and amazement.

Later when Jesus returned to the Decapolis region, He was met by crowds who brought Him a deaf and mute man to heal, which suggests that the former demoniac's witness had a lasting effect. The people were now ready to receive Jesus. Crowds welcomed Jesus! (Mark 7:31–37) The Gerasene man's testimony paved the way for others to meet Jesus later on.

So, you don't need to have it all together. You just need to be willing to tell your story. God will do the rest. Jesus has set you free from your sin so you can tell others. . . . Maybe you see yourself in that man. Tired. Worn. Battling something you can't name. Maybe you will see yourself in that town. Afraid of what Jesus might change. Or maybe you're just standing at the edge wondering, *what's next?* Wherever you are, understand this. Jesus meets you in your brokenness. Jesus speaks with authority over every form of evil. And Jesus restores not just minds, but lives! Jesus says, *"Go. Tell what God has done for you."* You have been set free! Tell the Story! Be someone who lives in the freedom Christ brought. And share that freedom wherever you go. Let us pray.

Go now in the name of Jesus Christ—the One who calms the storms. Breaks every chain. And restores life and purpose. Walk in the freedom of God's grace. Stand in the power of His love. Speak boldly of what He has done for you. And say publicly not just with words, but with your life, just how much God has done for you! Amen.